

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 00589 271436Z

53

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AEC-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 CIEP-01

COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-01 INR-07

INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 RSC-01 SAM-01

OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-01 TRSE-00 FRB-03 PA-01 PRS-01

USIA-06 /088 W

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R 271325Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5387

INFO AMEMBSSY AMMAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, IS, JO

SUBJECT: ISRAELI OIL PROSPECTING

REF: TEL AVIV 5969

1. MOST PAPERS JAN 27 CARRY OPTIMISTIC REPORTS ON OIL PROSPECTING DEVELOPMENTS FOLLOWING STATEMENT BY GEOLOGIST(EMPLOYED BY ISRAELI GEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE) THAT TEST DRILLINGS AT RAMALLAH SITE ON WEST BANK HAVE YIELDED POSITIVE RESULTS. ACCORDING TO GEOLOGIST, DRILLING AT RAMALLAH WAS HALTED

IN OCTOBER (REFTEL) DUE TO EQUIPMENT LIMITATIONS AT DEPTH OF 4,500 METERS. HOWEVER, IN HIS VIEW, LABORATORY ANALYSIS OF SAMPLES FROM THIS DRILLING DISCLOSE GEOLOGICAL STRUCTURES QUITE SIMILAR TO THOSE OF OIL RESERVOIRS IN SYRIA AND IRAQ. THESE ARE TRIASSIC ROCKS AT DEPT OF 6000 METERS. GEOLOGIST ESTIMATES THAT MAXIMUM TOTAL RESERVES IF STRUCTURES PROVED TO BE OF SYRIAN/IRAQI TYPE WOULD BE ON ORDER

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PAGE 02 TEL AV 00589 271436Z

OF ONE BILLION TONS, OR ROUGHLY 125 TIMES ISRAEL'S TOTAL

1974 CONSUMPTION.

2. DESPITE FOREGOING, GEOLOGIST EMPHASIZED THAT IT IS TOO EARLY TO BE OPTIMISTIC THAT OL WILL ACTUALLY BE DISCOVERED. IN ADDITION TO FACT THAT PRESENT ANALYSIS IS BASED ON ONLY ONE DRILLING, IT IS ALSO TOO SOON TO SAY WHETHER DEEP DRILLINGS REQUIRED WOULD BE CONOMICALLY AND TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE. RAMALLAH SITE IS DEEPEST DRILLING TO DAT, AND AT PRESENT THERE IS NO EQUIPMENT IN COUNTRY CAPABLE OF REACHING 6000 METER DEPTH. FUTURE PLANS CALL FOR TEST DRILLINGS AT SIXTEEN ADDITIONAL SITES AND ARE SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN APRIL.

3. MANAGING DIRECTOR OF LAPIDOT OIL PROSPECTING COMPANY PUT REPORTS IN PERSPECTIVE BY STRESSING THAT RESULTS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY BORE NO RELATION TO PRACTICAL PLANNING. THERE IS NO BASIS FOR ACTING AS IF AN OIL RESERVOIR HAD ACTUALLY BEEN DISCOVERED, HE SAID, NOR IS IT KNOWN HOW MUCH OIL RESERVOIR WOULD CONTAIN OR EVEN WHEN IT MIGHT BE TECHNICALLY POSSIBLE TO UNDERTAKE NECESSARY DRILLINGS, PRESS HAD OVERPLAYED SIGNIFICANCE OF GEOLOGIST'S COMMENTS ON LABORATORY ANALYSIS, AND HEADLINES, SUCH AS JERUSALEM POST'S, WHICH USED WORD "STRIKE" WERE TOTALLY MISLEADING. VELIOTES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EXPLORATORY DRILLING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TELAV00589
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750029-0815
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750116/aaaaaoiw.tel
Line Count: 85
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 TEL AVIV 5969
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 AUG 2003 by WorrelSW>; APPROVED <28 NOV 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ISRAELI OIL PROSPECTING
TAGS: ENRG, IS, JO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006